



Thelma Mae Upshaw

December 1, 1930 - July 10, 2020

Thelma Mae (Richins) Upshaw was born in Virden, New Mexico on December 1, 1930 to George Arthur and Leah (Naegle) Richins. She grew up without indoor plumbing, electricity, television or telephone, not to mention microwave ovens, computers, satellites, internet, cell phones, GPS, email, or Facebook. She lived on a farm just to the north of Lordsburg, NM with dirt roads, cattle, horses, chickens. Her mother died when she was five and she was raised by her Dad and Stepmother, Lenore, along with one brother, three sisters and one half-brother. In 1948 Thelma, and girlfriends, Joanne Kerr & Arabella Strasser Hill drove from Lordsburg to dance with the cowboys from the Animas valley where she met her future husband, Bert James Upshaw. She graduated from Lordsburg high school and married Bert on March 10, 1950. Bert was mobilized with the New Mexico National Guard in 1950 for the Korean Conflict and was sent to Fort Bliss. There Thelma gave birth to their first child, Bert James Jr. After

Bert's release the couple moved back to Lordsburg, then Silver City where Rick and Mark were born, then back to El Paso where Gary was born, followed by Las Cruces and finally back to Cotton City in 1962 where they farmed, ranched, and worked until 1979. Dell and Ilynn were both born during this period.

Thelma served in many callings in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but she liked Young Women's best. One of the projects she worked on during her youth is preserved by The Church Historical Society in Salt Lake.

In 1979 her and Bert moved to Dallas Texas area to work and live until Bert's retirement in 2005.

Bert and Thelma were called on a mission to work in Laotian Branch of The Church in the Richardson Stake in 1994. They served for 8 ½ years there and enjoyed learning a new culture and language without having left the country. Thelma played the piano for Sacramento was the Relief Society President, Primary President and Librarian. She would quote several Laotian words the rest of her life to include: Pumbanthukkhong mo mon (Book of Mormon) and Phrachao (Heavenly Father).

In 2005 they move to Alpine, Texas where Thelma helped to raise some of her grandchildren including Jeremy, Jared and Cristi. Her most oft-quoted scripture was Matthew 5:44 "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them

that hate you,
and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”
Thelma continued to serve in the Primary and went to church every Sunday.
Bert passed
away in 2012 and she remained in Alpine until she moved to Aubrey, TX with
son BJ in
2019 to live with Jared and Dinah. BJ cared for her daily until her passing, on
10 JULY
2020.

Her funeral service will be held at the LDS Church in Virden, NM on Sunday,
July 19 at 1:00 p.m. Arizona time.

Internment will immediately follow. She is survived by two sisters, Lucille and
Betty, six
children, thirty grand-children and sixty-five great-grandchildren, and two on
the way.

To send a flower arrangement to the family of Thelma Mae Upshaw, please
[click here](#) to visit our Sympathy Store.

Tribute Wall

AS

“ I, Argie Hoskins, joined the church while living in Animas. I knew this dear lady and the Upshaw family. The Richins and Upshaw families are a precious memory. I am now 89 years and remember the wonderful Cotton City members of the church. You have been my blessings with the Payne family. I love my treasured memories of the world of Thelma Richins Upshaw.

argie shumway - November 28, 2024 at 12:37 PM

DW

“ May the Lord wrap his arms around Thelma's family and comfort them at this time.

Dee (Stock) Weddle - July 17, 2020 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ You will be so missed by me and Johnny. When I first met you I was a little nervous meeting my step grandmother but you were so wonderful. You took me in like my own grandmother there was nothing but love from you. You showed me I could have love in your heart for me and my brother Johnny. I will always remember the good times o had with you and your family. Rest in peace grandmother I love you always, Julie

Julie Windham Mccraine - July 16, 2020 at 12:00 AM